



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**
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Secretary of Transportation

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April 25, 2006

To: SR 519 Past and Potential Project Partners

Subject: SR 519 Phase 2 – Request for Concurrence in Project Direction

As you may know, WSDOT is concluding its seven month effort to evaluate whether or not there are feasible alternatives to the original S. Royal Brougham Way - Edgar Martinez Way S. (formerly S. Atlantic Street) couplet design, identified as the preferred option in the project's 1997 Environmental Assessment (EA). This feasibility study was undertaken after the consensus originally reached for the project's EA fell apart, and with the knowledge and concurrence of the majority of the interested parties closely involved with this project. The purpose of this feasibility study was, specifically, to determine if an SR 519 Phase 2 design exists that meets the following criteria:

- Abandon the original S. Royal Brougham Way - Edgar Martinez Way S. couplet design;
- Accommodate future 2030 growth needs for highway capacity and freight mobility;
- Allow for improved rail and pedestrian safety improvements; and
- Work within the context of a complex built environment that has undergone significant change since the project was originally conceived.

We believe the results of the study have clearly shown that there is a feasible alternative that meets the original project intent, and that warrants continued environmental and design study. This continued study would openly engage the public and provide the additional detail necessary to enhance, optimize and validate the concept-level design work performed over the past seven months. Further, because it is highly desirable to construct these improvements prior to major construction on the Alaskan Way Viaduct Project, which could begin as early as 2010, it is imperative that the environmental and design processes be conducted concurrently. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to reach agreement with all interested parties on a new preferred design concept before commencing the update process. If this is not possible, then construction of the majority of the SR 519 Phase 2 improvements will have to wait until completion of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Project, currently anticipated between 2016 and 2018.

However, some improvements must be made prior to the beginning of the major work effort on the Alaskan Way Viaduct Project, even if a consensus cannot be reached soon for the ultimate SR 519 vision. Therefore, WSDOT will proceed with the following short-term improvements:

- The 1st Avenue S. and Edgar Martinez Way S. intersection requires left turn capacity improvements to provide adequate current and future traffic operations. The work to design and construct those improvements will advance independently, with a goal of construction by 2008.
- In light of the planned AMTRAK maintenance facility spanning S. Holgate Street, continued priority attention needs to be given to the discussion and coordination of both near term and long term rail and vehicular safety needs between S. Occidental Street and 4th Avenue S.

Our choices on what to do ultimately in this corridor boil down to two basic options, referred to during our April 21, 2006 meeting as the 'Go' and 'No-Go' options. As discussed at that meeting, variations of the proposals listed below are not acceptable, since we've reached the point in time where we need to establish clear project direction in order to continue our work efforts. Needless to say, the option of pursuing dual designs, including the original couplet concept, into the environmental and design processes is not reasonable given the conditions described within this letter: It is time to answer the question, "Go" or "No Go?"

The SR 519 'Go' option includes:

- Recognition that the original Phase 2 couplet design has been formally abandoned and will not be re-considered within the continued environmental planning and design efforts (outside of formally documenting the reasons it is considered to be not feasible).
- Agreement that WSDOT will concurrently pursue design and environmental process updates for the SR 519 highway concepts identified in the Feasibility Assessment (namely alternatives A, B, A+B, and any ensuing variations), along with the S. Royal Brougham Way pedestrian overpass options and local connector roadway.

The SR 519 'No-Go' option includes:

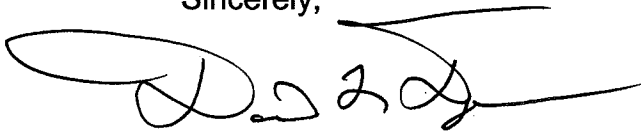
- No additional work beyond the Feasibility Assessment currently being completed.
- If resolution of SR 519 Phase 2 project direction is achieved at some future time, construction of the SR 519 Phase 2 mobility and rail/pedestrian safety improvements would be postponed until after the completion of the major Alaskan Way Viaduct Project work.

This letter formally requests that the signatory parties to the May 2000 memorandum of agreement for the SR 519 project respond to this letter with a letter stating the formal position of each party with respect to support for either the 'Go' or 'No-Go' option. Parties expected to provide response letters include: the City of Seattle; King County; the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District; the Baseball Club of Seattle, L.P.; the Port of Seattle; the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company; The Washington State Public Stadium Authority; and First & Goal, Incorporated. It is expected that the letter be short, to the point in stating a 'Go' or 'No-Go' position, and without special conditions that make the response unclear or difficult to interpret. The letters are to be addressed to David Dye, WSDOT Urban Corridors Administrator, at the below address, and are expected to be received by May 12th at the latest. We anticipate a follow-up meeting soon afterwards to discuss the responses and finalize the understanding for any next steps.

We also welcome the formal opinions and thoughts of the other partnership agencies represented within the SODO Rail Corridor Policy Group regarding the 'Go' or 'No-Go' decision, and any consequences associated with this decision.

If you have questions related to the specifics of the project or details of the elements included in the above options, please contact John H. White, Project Manager, at (206) 267-6388.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Dye', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David Dye
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DD:jhw

Cc: Dan Mathis, Federal Highways Administration
Chris Picard, WSDOT Urban Planning Office
Stanley Hall, AMTRAK
Martin Minkoff, Sound Transit
Charlie Howard, PSRC
Judy Giniger, WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Office
Dan O'Neal, Washington State Transportation Commission
Ron Paananen, WSDOT